

**COMMUNITY COHESION POLICY REVIEW
2011/12: SETTING THE SCENE**

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: SP3: SAFE CITY

CORPORATE PRIORITIES: C101: Delivering Customer Focussed Services, C102: Being 'One Council', C103: Efficient and Effective Council, C104: Improving partnership working to deliver 'One City'

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the background to the Committee's policy review into community cohesion.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 7 June 2011, the Committee agreed to undertake a policy review into the actions and interventions being taken by the Council and its partners in relation to community cohesion and how national policy will impact on the city.
- 2.2 Members chose this area in view of the importance attached by local people to the related issues of improving employment opportunities, tackling poverty, improving educational attainment, securing better housing and improving sport and cultural activities.
- 2.3 At its meeting on 19 July 2011, the Committee received a report outlining the process to be adopted for the review, together with background information on the development and evolution of the concept of community cohesion during the past decade.
- 2.4 It was agreed that the policy review should include consideration of the following themes:-
- the background and policy context for the development of community cohesion at a national and local level;
 - the priorities for a future refresh of the Sunderland Partnership Community Cohesion Strategy;
 - the range of community cohesion interventions in the city across a number of themes including young people, sport and cultural activities, education, housing and planning, community safety and policing, press and media and ethnic and minority groups;

- the policies and programmes of the Council, its partners and the community and voluntary sector which can help bring people together across the city and build bridges between communities;
- the range of interventions being taken to tackle tensions for example between older and younger generations within neighbourhoods and communities;

- 2.5 Community cohesion is a relatively new term which first came into use widely following the disturbances in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley in 2001. In response to these disturbances, the Government commissioned the Cattle report. This report focused on the importance of developing a dialogue and understanding between members of different racial, cultural and religious communities and ensuring an open debate about issues such as identity, shared values and citizenship.
- 2.6 During the last decade, our understanding of the features of a cohesive community have continued to develop and evolve. This has reflected not only the complexity of the issue but also the fact that there is no one fits all solution to the problems faced regionally or at a local level. Community cohesion has therefore come to encompass broader issues than ethnicity or faith. It has now come to include wider issues such as tackling poverty and inequalities and developing people's understanding and tolerance of others.
- 2.7 As part of the review, the Committee will receive a presentation by Jane Hibberd, Head of Strategy and Policy (People and Neighbourhoods). The presentation will supply contextual background and set the scene for the review for the year ahead.
- 2.8 Also attached for information is a copy of the Sunderland Partnership Community Cohesion Strategy 2008- 2015. This document sets the framework for community cohesion work in the city. The Strategy aims to ensure that our communities are strong and vibrant and also the opportunities that exist to ensure that the people of Sunderland feel fully able to participate in the life and future of the city.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are recommended to consider the report which will be included as part of its policy review into community cohesion.

4. Background Papers

Sunderland Partnership – Community Cohesion Strategy 2008-2015

